

A NOTE ON ABUNDANCE OF *HASORA KHODA HASLIA* SWINHOE (LEPIDOPTERA: HESPERIIDAE) IN SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

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Abstract

Data are presented suggesting that *Hasora khoda haslia* (large banded awl) has become considerably more common in the Sydney district, N.S.W., since 1986 than hitherto. This may be due to utilization of cultivated wisteria as a larval host.

Introduction

Common and Waterhouse (1981) mention that *Hasora khoda haslia* is "usually uncommon at Sydney but many have been taken in recent years at Bayview by L.C. Haines". This comment relating to abundance is certainly applicable to our gardens in Turrumurra and Ryde where the sighting of a specimen was a noteworthy event, at least since 1960 when our observations on local butterflies began. During the summer of 1987-88 this species was unusually common, prompting us to collect data on its occurrence in Sydney. Common and Waterhouse (1981) also mention "the larvae may occasionally occur on the garden *Wisteria* for J.F.R. Kerr has taken an empty pupal skin on this plant which probably belongs to this species". The usual host plant is *Milletia megasperma* (F. Muell.) Benth. (Fabaceae) of which the natural distribution is restricted to northern New South Wales and south-eastern Queensland. One specimen is growing in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

Recent Sydney Records of *Hasora khoda haslia*

Table 1 summarises recent captures and sightings of *H. khoda haslia* in the Sydney area.

In addition to the records listed in the table the Australian Museum has specimens bred by G. Rushworth at Turrumurra which emerged on 7.i.1974, 14.v.1979, 12.xi.1980, 12.ii.1982 and 13.ii.1982.

Discussion

The appearance of large numbers of *H. khoda haslia* in the summer of 1987-88 was preceded in the summer of 1985-86 by a slight increase in the number of sightings. This was in strong contrast to the previous scarcity of specimens (at least since 1960) in gardens. Records suggest that an increase in numbers in the 1988-89 season had taken place over a wide area of Sydney and not only in the northern suburbs (e.g. Oyster Bay specimens reported by L. Foster for iii.1989, when large numbers were seen flying around wisteria).

Table 1. Dates of sightings and captures of *H. khoda haslia* in Sydney

Turrumurra	Ryde	Other suburbs
12.xi.1980 (Bred G. Rushworth)	16.ii.1981	
	2.iii.1984	11.xii.1983 28.i.1985 25.ii.1985
	5.i.1986	
	4.ii.1986	
	5.ii.1986	
6.ii.1987	22.ii.1987	
14.xii.1987	15.xii.1987 (laying)	
27.i.1988	22.xii.1987	
29.i.1988	24.i.1988 (emerged)	
8.ii.1988	2.ii.1988	
11.ii.1988	6.ii.1988	
	10.ii.1988 (laying)	
	1.iii.1988 (emerged)	
10.ix.1988	5.iii.1989	11.ii.1989
10.ii.1989		iii.1989
26.ii.1989		(Obs. L. Foster)
27.ii.1989		
5.iii.1989		

Cultivated wisteria has long been grown in Sydney gardens and the butterfly has occasionally been present.

Life history

During the period of increased occurrence females were observed ovipositing on garden wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis* Sims (Sweet)) at Ryde (15.xii.1987, 10.ii.1988). The egg stage lasted 5 days, the larval period was 20 days and the pupal period 15 days at ambient room temperature (obs. J.V. Peters).

Variations in occurrence of Australian butterflies are unfortunately seldom documented in the literature. It will be interesting to see if the increase in *H. khoda haslia* at Sydney is permanent or if the numbers decline in future seasons.

Reference

COMMON, I.F.B. and WATERHOUSE, D.F. 1981. *Butterflies of Australia*. Pp. xiv + 682. Angus and Robertson, Sydney.